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Friday, 19 October 2018, 10 a..m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Cordova Soria	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Woldegerima
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/866)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/866)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/866, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

Mr. Lacroix (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the members of the Security Council on the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2018/866), and to inform them of the latest political, security and humanitarian developments in the country.

The past three months were marked by the holding of a presidential election, which, as acknowledged by all election observers, took place in a generally peaceful atmosphere. I commend Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga on his efforts to promote constructive political dialogue throughout the process. I also congratulate our colleague the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, Mr. Annadif, whose good offices played a crucial role in easing tensions.

The successful holding of the elections demonstrated the political maturity of the Malian people and the commitment of the political class to the democratic process. In a particularly volatile security environment, the successful organization of the election also highlighted an important achievement of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali — the consensus reached among the signatories to the Agreement, as reflected in the vital role played by signatory armed groups in providing security at several election sites in the north of the country. Such consensus was undoubtedly the key factor that enabled the election to be held according to the electoral calendar and without major security incidents, despite reports of unrest in the centre of the country.

At the same time, the holding of the elections should have been underpinned by further progress in the implementation of key institutional reforms, including the operationalization of interim authorities, constitutional reform, security sector reform and the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration process. In addition, the important role the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was forced to play in providing security at election sites has highlighted the low level of operationalization of the various Operational Coordination Mechanism units. Delays in implementing the Agreement, along with certain crucial but stagnant initiatives to strengthen political dialogue, such as the charter for peace and national reconciliation, have also resulted in a lack of national cohesion, underscored by a fragmented political landscape. Differences in the electoral law and electoral register have also increased the number of opposition challenges to the results.

I remain convinced that ongoing discussions for a possible postponement of the parliamentary elections will create a climate of consensus for successful constitutional review and electoral governance reforms. The elections will serve as a new litmus test of the cohesion of Mali's political class and society and as an important step towards the consolidation of democratic institutions. I therefore urge the Government and the opposition to engage in constructive political dialogue, based on inclusiveness and bearing national interests in mind. I also encourage Malian political actors to take the opportunity afforded by the presidential elections to build a more representative Parliament by promoting young people and women as candidates. In that regard, I welcome the composition of the new Government, which, in keeping with Malian law, is now more than 30 per cent female.

The pact for peace, as requested by the Security Council in resolution 2423 (2018) and signed on 15 October by the Government and the United Nations at the meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, is an essential tool to spur the efforts of the Malian parties, supported by the international community, to

implement the Agreement and give new impetus to the peace process by focusing on inclusiveness. The pact does not replace the peace agreement. It underlines the importance of implementing the main provisions of the agreement, as stipulated in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the resolution and in the road map adopted by the parties on 22 March.

Progress on the implementation of the pact, as well as on the key provisions of the agreement, will be brought to the attention of the Security Council six months after the inauguration of the President of the Republic. If no progress has been made, those elements, supported by the work of the independent observer, will provide a solid basis for considering appropriate measures, if necessary. In that regard, I welcome the convening of the high-level meeting on Mali and the Sahel on 26 September on the sidelines of the general debate of the General Assembly here in New York, which enabled us to reaffirm the key role played by the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including in response to the challenges that have arisen in the centre of the country. It was also an opportunity to highlight the complementarity of the political response in Mali, the support provided to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), and the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

At the same time, I was encouraged during my visit to Mali by the willingness of all parties to the agreement to accelerate its implementation. The creation of a ministry that is specifically responsible for the implementation of the Agreement, headed by Mr. Lassine Bouaré, is also a sign of the Government's strong commitment to pursuing that goal.

I would like to express to the Security Council my extreme concern about the security situation in Mali, especially in the centre of the country — a region in which, during the two rounds of the presidential election, almost 80 per cent of the polling stations affected by a lack of security were concentrated. The Secretary-General notes in his latest report that that three-month period was the deadliest since the establishment of MINUSMA in 2013. Some 287 civilians were killed in targeted attacks, including by improvised explosive devices or mines and intercommunity clashes between armed self-defence or violent extremist groups.

That situation continues to restrict the access of humanitarian actors to those who are most vulnerable and to limit the scope of action in terms of development interventions. In addition to exacerbating the situation with regard to humanitarian development in the country, as well as human rights, it could perpetuate a sense of frustration in the Malian population, which is struggling to see the concrete benefits of the agreement's implementation materialize. The restoration and extension of State authority must, therefore, be a priority in order to contribute to the delivery of concrete and measurable peace dividends on the ground.

In that regard, as requested by the Security Council in resolution 2423 (2018), MINUSMA and the United Nations country team have begun developing a comprehensive strategic framework in support of the Malian Government's comprehensive security plan for the central regions. That framework will enable them to coordinate their actions in support of governance, peace and stabilization in order to improve their impact on the ground in a comprehensive way.

(*spoke in English*)

Over the past few months, we have also been witnessing an intensification in violent extremist attacks in neighbouring Burkina Faso. Insecurity is spreading fast, across and inside borders, with consequences ranging from the forced displacement of local communities to the erosion of State authority and the sharply diminished delivery of basic social services. That dire situation threatens not only the security of the peoples of Mali and the Sahel, but international security as a whole. We are all running against the clock.

In that context, the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, for which the Secretary-General continues to provide his steadfast support, remains as relevant as ever. What is needed is a regionally driven solution to address instability in Mali and the region, which must be complemented by initiatives aimed at improving governance, resilience and development. Yet, if the Joint Force is to achieve any positive results in its fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime, it will require sustained and appropriate support from its international partners.

Moreover, given the inter-operability and complementarity of the Joint Force with MINUSMA, it will be important to continue evaluating the impact of the Mission over and against the progressive operationalization of the Joint Force. That is an aspect that will be reflected in the six-month progress report requested by the Security Council to be submitted in March 2019.

Before concluding my remarks, I wish to draw the Council's attention to a more hopeful sign in the midst of this challenging situation. We are indeed pleased to report that the past months have shown a consistent and marked decline in the number of peacekeepers killed or injured, despite sustained attacks by violent extremist groups. At this stage, while we should not attribute that decline — at least not exclusively — to the impact of the implementation of the recommendations of the report of retired Lieutenant General Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*, this is, of course, an encouraging trend. However, we must, of course, remain cautious; we do not know what tomorrow will bring. We will certainly continue our efforts to change mindsets and improve training and equipment, so that our peacekeepers can continue to deliver the Mission's mandate in the best possible conditions for their security and effectiveness.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his very enlightening briefing. I also welcome the highly appreciated presence of Ambassador Konfourou in the Council, who will deliver a statement on behalf of Mali.

I wish to begin my statement by conveying our wishes for a speedy recovery to the five Chadian soldiers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) who were seriously injured when their vehicle passed over an explosive device yesterday in northern Mali. I also pay tribute to the memory of Corporal Abdelatif Rafik, who died under accidental circumstances on Wednesday in Gao during Operation Barkhane. His death brings the number of French soldiers who have died in Mali since 2013 to 23. Finally, our thoughts go out to all the Malian and regional soldiers and MINUSMA Blue Helmets who have lost their lives in recent months while combating terrorism and promoting peace in Mali and the Sahel. Their sacrifice must be heeded by all of us in our reflections on our obligations.

The election that led to the reappointment of President Keita was an important moment in Malian democratic life. I wish to commend the decisive role played by MINUSMA, both through its good offices and its logistical and security support, to ensure that the election was conducted in satisfactory conditions, as has been acknowledged by the Council and all observers present on the ground. It is now essential that all Malian political actors move forward, recognizing the results of the election and working together for the stabilization of the country. The announced postponement of the legislative elections for a few months, following a favourable opinion on the part of the Constitutional Court, is also welcome. That should make it possible to implement, in the meantime, several institutional reforms that will have a direct impact on those elections.

The implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali must remain the top priority. The signing of the pact for peace, just a few months after the adoption of resolution 2423 (2018), is good news. That document notes, in particular, the commitment of all Malian parties and international actors to the swift, full and inclusive work of implementing the agreement. It is now up to us to support that dynamic by mobilizing all of the tools available to the international community to encourage the parties to move forward. In particular, we hope that the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali will continue its work in the coming weeks by visiting the country itself, which will enable it to make contact with all of the Malian parties, as well as with various international mediation actors. In that regard, I would like to commend the work carried out by Sweden as Chair of that Committee.

But let us make no mistake — there is still much progress that needs to be made, and urgently. Resolution 2423 (2018) provides a clear framework in that regard by defining a list of priority measures resulting from the road map agreed by the Malian parties. Its implementation will be examined in a report of the Secretary-General to be submitted every six months once the Malian President assumes power. That period has already begun and merits our full engagement. It is necessary that we act now.

The past few weeks have witnessed the start of a positive dynamic that we must welcome, encourage and strengthen. I am referring in particular to the announcement of the upcoming launch of an accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for Operational Coordination Mechanism combatants, the ongoing finalization of the northern regions development zone, the granting of greater

roles for women within the new Government, and the establishment of a weekly consultation framework among the various Malian parties under the leadership of Minister Lassine Bouaré. Those are all indications that illustrate for us the will of the parties to step up the pace of the implementation of the Agreement. Continued progress is clearly needed, especially with regard to the institutional component and the areas of justice and reconciliation. Once again, however, a positive dynamic has been initiated, and it is essential that it bear results in the coming weeks.

As the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations recalled earlier, the continuing deterioration of the situation in the centre of the country continues to be of great concern to us. The attacks of recent days illustrate the gravity of the threat weighing on that part of Mali and, more generally, the Liptako-Gourma region. We commend the actions taken by the Prime Minister in addressing that issue and his recent visits to the region to encourage the return of a State presence and authority in the centre. It is imperative that the international community fully support those efforts so that the Malian State has the necessary additional resources at its disposal to regain control of the centre.

The redeployment of the Malian armed forces in that area is one part of the equation. Tools have been put in place in MINUSMA's mandate to support that undertaking since June 2017. It is important that the Malian authorities and the Mission make better use of them. We also expect MINUSMA to continue to implement the new directions in its mandate with regard to the protection of civilians with the means at their disposal, while avoiding compromising the strategic priority of supporting the implementation of the agreement.

France emphasizes the fact that the stabilization of Mali and the region can be achieved only through the complementary and coordinated action of the various security forces on the ground, which all share the same goal of supporting the implementation of the Agreement. The support provided by Operation Barkhane to the Malian armed forces within the framework of a counter-terrorist operation within the three-border region this week exemplifies the advantages of such an approach based on partnerships. On another level, the same applies to the operational and logistical support regularly shared among the various actors. Resolution 2423 (2018) sent a clear message in that regard, according to which each entity must play its individual role within the limits of its mandate, but all must coordinate and support one another on the ground in the prevailing difficult circumstances. Let us not forget that the enemies of peace have not waited for us to begin cooperating among themselves.

As we collectively expressed in the adoption of resolution 2423 (2018), the urgency now lies with the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. The six-month period for implementing the priority measures identified by the Council has begun. The Malian parties must now concentrate all their energies to that end. France will issue a press statement to that effect at the end of this meeting.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): First of all, my delegation echoes the expression of sympathy and condolences that the representative of France offered at the beginning of his statement.

My delegation welcomes the holding of this briefing on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his comprehensive presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/866) on the latest developments in the political, security and humanitarian situation in Mali.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomed the peaceful holding of the presidential elections on 29 July and 12 August in Mali, which saw the re-election of the President, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. As rightly pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, those elections have demonstrated the profound aspirations of the Malian people for peace, as well as the coming of age of the political class throughout each stage of the electoral process. Côte d'Ivoire notes with satisfaction that the much-feared violence by armed groups was avoided and did not affect the inclusivity or credibility of the elections, particularly in the north and centre of the country. We note the decision of the Malian authorities, together with the Malian political class, to postpone the legislative elections, which were initially scheduled for late 2018, and we encourage them to ensure the holding of those elections as soon as possible so as to complete the electoral process, which will ensure peace and stability.

In order to maintain the positive momentum, Côte d'Ivoire once again urges the Malian Government and all political actors to work more effectively, while overlooking their differences, to preserve peace and

stability in Mali. In that regard, my country welcomes the 15 October signing of the pact for peace between the Government of Mali and the United Nations, in accordance with resolution 2423 (2018). The pact aims to give a new impetus to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Paragraph 7 of the pact stipulates that decisions reached through international mediation are binding, thereby strengthening the role of international actors, including the United Nations. In that regard, my country encourages the international actors to pursue their multifaceted assistance so as to achieve peace and stability in Mali despite persistent difficulties.

Côte d'Ivoire also commends the efforts of the Government of Mali with regard to the political and institutional measures undertaken, including the re-establishment of the Malian Administration. Those efforts were realized through the appointment of interim authorities in 21 districts of the five northern regions, the progressive operationalization of the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in the regions of Kidal and Timbuktu, and the adoption of the national security-sector reform strategy. My delegation also calls for the finalization of the vision for the reconstitution of a new army and of the territorial police, with a view to ensuring the improved protection of the civilian population in the north and centre of the country.

Côte d'Ivoire notes with concern, however, the Secretary-General's observations concerning the persistence of security incidents in central Mali. My country believes that it is urgent to respond expeditiously and appropriately to intercommunal violence and allegations of abuse attributed to members of the Malian armed forces. To that end, the implementation of the integrated security plan for the central regions should be supported by multifaceted initiatives aimed at strengthening governance, development and, above all, reconciliation among communities.

To date, MINUSMA is a key pillar of the current security apparatus in Mali and the region. Working in complementarity with the various forces on the ground, namely, the Malian armed forces, Operation Barkhane, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the European missions, provides an added value in combating insecurity and terrorism in Mali. It is therefore imperative to strengthen the operational capabilities of MINUSMA in order to enable it to react and even predict attacks effectively on its civilian and military personnel and to continue to support the Malian armed forces.

The worrying spread of terrorist attacks into certain neighbouring countries is a stark reminder that combating terrorism and organized cross-border crime is a regional security issue that requires the coordinated efforts of all regional and international actors. Côte d'Ivoire therefore welcomes the unity of the Council and the international community's consistent support for MINUSMA and the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. It also welcomes the commitment of all bilateral and multilateral partners that are working tirelessly to restore and consolidate peace and stability in Mali and the subregion.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its call on the parties concerned to work towards providing basic social services and the operationalization of programmes to combat poverty and unemployment, particularly in the northern part of Mali and the Sahel, which are recruitment and breeding grounds for terrorist movements.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for today's briefing.

Implementing the mandate of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is an incredibly challenging task. A large part of that mandate — with a force of more than 12,000 personnel in a country the size of Mali — takes the right leader, and MINUSMA found that leader in Major General Jean-Paul Deconinck. He completed his command on 2 October, and we are grateful for his leadership during his time as Force Commander. We welcome the new Force Commander of MINUSMA, Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre, and thank him for his commitment in taking on such a challenging assignment. Most importantly, we want to thank the soldiers, police and civilians of MINUSMA, who risk their lives every day to support the Mission in Mali. That includes the latest troop-contributing countries, Canada and Jordan. The United States is grateful to all troop contributors to the Mission, and we honour their collective commitments and sacrifices to the effort to stabilize Mali. We also commend MINUSMA's efforts this past summer in supporting the presidential elections.

We are concerned, however, by reports of some troop-contributing countries not being deployed with all the equipment that they had committed to bringing. That heightens the risk to their units and to the overall

Mission, and we call on troop-contributing countries to follow through on their equipment commitments. We share the Secretary-General's view regarding the political progress made in Mali since MINUSMA's mandate renewal in June. The pact for peace, which was finalized this week, the completion of the presidential elections and the establishment of President Keita's Government provide cause for some cautious optimism in reinvigorating the peace process. But the work must not stop here. The Government of Mali and the signatory parties must use that momentum to make clear and swift gains in implementing the key provisions of the road map.

Increased reports of violent extremist attacks against MINUSMA peacekeepers, Malian and international security forces, and especially civilians, as well as the growing humanitarian crisis in the centre of Mali, are extremely unsettling. The heartbreaking story this week from the village of Telly that gunmen had killed approximately a dozen civilians reminds us of the urgency of finding an enduring solution. This year's mandate asked MINUSMA to continue to support the Government of Mali in stabilizing key population centres in the north, centre and other areas where civilians are at risk. We call on the Government and the Mission to protect civilians and strengthen community outreach mechanisms so as to end the intercommunal violence that is propagated by self-proclaimed self-defence groups. We also call on the Malian forces to respect human rights and comply with applicable international law in all aspects of operations, and we urge the Government to continue to pursue accountability for those responsible for past human rights violations and abuses.

Council resolution 2423 (2018) is clear — signatory parties must show significant progress or face changes to MINUSMA after the expiration of its current mandate. We implore all parties to take that timeline seriously and show the world their commitment to a peaceful and stable Mali through the rapid implementation of the key provisions of the road map stipulated in this year's mandate.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Let me begin by thanking the Permanent Representative of Mali, Ambassador Konfourou, for joining the discussions today, and let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his informative briefing.

We recognize recent progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and particularly welcome the signing of the pact for peace in Bamako earlier this week. It is now important that the parties redouble their efforts to carry out key reforms, as outlined by the pact and resolution 2423 (2018). The reforms relating to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as to decentralization and security-sector reform, the rule of law, social cohesion and socioeconomic development, should now be taken forward without any delay. It is also important that the mixed patrols of the Operational Coordination Mechanism be able to begin patrolling and that regional and local interim authorities be made fully operational. The Council and other partners should continue to support the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation through established mechanisms. We call on all parties to take full advantage of that support, including the independent observer and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali. As Chair of that Committee, Ambassador Skoog plans to visit Mali later this year.

Inclusivity is essential for long-term stability. We therefore welcome the commitment in the Pact for Peace to seeking an inclusive approach to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. We hope that the Government will translate that commitment into further action without delay. As underlined by the Council in resolution 2423 (2018), the parties should ensure the full and equal participation of women in the peace process, including through the greater representation of women in the mechanisms established by the Agreement to support and monitor its implementation, as well as in the upcoming elections.

The continued deterioration in the security situation, in particular in central Mali, remains of great concern. We are particularly alarmed by the increasing number of civilian casualties, now the highest number during any reporting period since the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We are also deeply concerned by the spillover of insecurity into Burkina Faso and the wider region. The targeted attacks on civilians and intercommunal clashes, limited access to humanitarian support and inadequate access to basic social services and justice are deeply concerning. Allegations of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, reports of widespread conflict-related sexual violence

and grave violations against children further add to those concerns. We call on the Malian Government to increase efforts to prevent and investigate human rights violations and abuses, including those committed by the Malian armed forces.

It is now urgent to stem the tide of violence and carefully assess our joint approach to the protection of civilians in the central regions. That includes assessing the approach of the Government, the United Nations and other actors. Addressing the root causes of the situation must also be part of that analysis. We welcome further information on the ongoing efforts in that regard, including in relation to resolution 2423 (2018) and the Government's integrated security plan. We also commend the efforts of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, and we continue to advocate for sustained support.

Sweden remains a committed partner to Mali and the entire Sahel region in their efforts to enhance security and development and build sustainable peace. Our broader commitment includes support through the United Nations and the European Union, and through bilateral and regional development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. It also includes a substantial troop contribution to MINUSMA, where Swedish Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre took up his functions as Force Commander of MINUSMA on 2 October. We will continue to strongly support the Mission, including through continuous engagement on the commitments made within the framework of the Action for Peacekeeping agenda. The decline in the number of peacekeeper fatalities in Mali is encouraging. It is important, however, that measures be taken to enhance the mobility of troops, with the aim of achieving greater operational effect in parallel with the efforts to strengthen the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Long-term stability and prosperity in Mali can be achieved only through a combination of security and development support. Strategic coordination must continue to be strengthened within MINUSMA and the United Nations, as well as coordination with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other partners. It is also important that cooperation be further enhanced between the countries in the Sahel region and the United Nations, including the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, so as to further advance the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. The Peacebuilding Commission offers an important forum for continuing discussions in that regard, including as steps are taken to transfer certain tasks to the United Nations country team and other development partners.

During the three years since the signing of the peace agreement for Mali, important progress has been made, but much still needs to be done to advance its effective implementation. We commend all of the efforts made and continue to urge all parties to take further steps without delay. Sweden will continue to offer its full support.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We join others in expressing our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing. We also welcome the presence of Ambassador Konfourou of Mali in the Council today. As an observer member of the African Union, we commend and associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire and statements that will be made today by other members of the African troika, namely, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia. We endorse the recommendations in the Secretary-General's quarterly report (S/2018/866) and would like to make the following observations regarding the situation in Mali.

At the outset, we would like to congratulate the people of Mali on the peaceful and successful conduct of their presidential elections. We commend the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for its logistical and technical assistance to the electoral process, and praise Special Representative Annadif and the representatives of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as France and Operation Barkhane, for their important role in facilitating peaceful dialogue among the political parties and ensuring stability in the country.

Every effort should now be made to accelerate the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Kazakhstan acknowledges the progress made in appointing interim authorities, operationalizing mixed units in the northern regions and adopting a national security-sector reform strategy. My delegation also welcomes the signing of a pact for peace between the Government of Mali and the United Nations, which we believe will significantly contribute to the fulfilment of the Agreement. The genuine inclusion of women in the peace process and in decision-making is also important

for lasting stability. In that regard, we recognize and appreciate the important work done by the Government of Mali so far to improve the human rights situation in the country, and encourage it to continue its much-needed efforts in this direction.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned about the growing cycle of violence in northern and central Mali, which has led to a significant deterioration in the humanitarian situation there. We urge all sides to comply with the relevant provisions of international law and call on international partners and donors to fund the humanitarian response plan for 2018.

Violent extremism and terrorism remain the main sources of instability. To counter these scourges with the overall goal of establishing a terrorism-free Africa, we need an approach that links security and development efforts. The challenges in Mali are common to all countries of the region and elsewhere in Africa. I would like to underline that during the Council's recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its previous visits to Lake Chad, West Africa and other conflict zones, we have heard the desire of host countries to devote more resources to economic development and the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), based on a regional approach. Indeed, a regional approach is crucially important to progress on the political, security and environmental fronts. Unfortunately, that focus is missing from the mandates of almost all peacekeeping operations, but we understand that there are objective reasons for that.

In that regard, we welcome General Assembly resolution 72/279, on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in line with the Secretary-General's new agenda for peace and his United Nations reform programme, one of the main elements of which is a revamped regional approach. For instance, in West Africa and the Sahel, we see an obvious need for introducing a separate team for specifically addressing the SDGs so as not to overload the existing regional United Nations offices, and which we believe could function in close collaboration with ECOWAS. In that regard, the proposed launch of an SDG centre in Kazakhstan for our part of the world could serve as a pilot project that could be further implemented in the African region.

Priority should also be given to national reconciliation, ensuring basic services, resilience-building, a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, good governance and the rule of law. Equally important are educating children and employing young people, who together constitute about 65 per cent of the Malian population. These are all essential to achieving lasting peace and stability in Mali.

Combating terrorism and other cross-border threats in Mali and its neighbours will succeed only if these measures are implemented comprehensively throughout the Sahel region as a whole. We support the full operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and underscore the importance of sustainable funding for it. We also call on all parties in Mali and the countries of the region to make every effort to implement the recently recalibrated United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which is a good basis for strengthened regional cooperation.

With regard to MINUSMA, we welcome the Mission's measures to reprioritize its tasks aimed at expanding its role in advancing the peace process. We also praise its successful implementation of its action plan to reduce peacekeeper fatalities. At the same time, it is critical to address the Mission's remaining capability gaps by providing better equipment and predeployment training that prepares contingents for the asymmetric conflict situations that Mali presents. It also important to protect the Malians themselves.

In conclusion, we commend Special Representative Annadif and all the brave men and women representing the United Nations for their commitment to peace in such a hazardous, hostile and challenging environment. Lastly, we fully support the outcome document proposed by the Permanent Representative of France.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his very informative briefing on recent developments in Mali. I would like to focus on three issues: the political process, the human rights situation and the security situation.

First, on the political process, we commend the Malian people for their peaceful and successful holding of the presidential elections within the time frame set by the Constitution, despite several anomalies and some security incidents in northern and central Mali. Following the re-election of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, we welcome his renewed commitment to the swift and full implementation of the remaining

key provisions of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. In that regard, we commend the Government of Mali and the United Nations for signing a pact for peace, in accordance with resolution 2423 (2018), at the last session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in October. The pact represents new momentum for political reforms in areas such as decentralization, the security sector and the rule of law, as well as socioeconomic development based on greater inclusiveness and with the coherent support of international and regional partners.

Secondly, the human rights situation remains alarming. We therefore call on the Malian Government to prevent human rights violations and abuses, including those committed by Malian armed forces when conducting counter-terrorism operations. Full and timely investigations into all allegations are essential, as are measures designed to bring perpetrators of these crimes to account.

We also want to underline the responsibility of the Malian authorities to take every action necessary to swiftly investigate and prosecute perpetrators of crimes and grave human rights abuses against civilians, as well as those responsible for attacks against humanitarian workers, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), international forces and Malian defence and security forces. Taking into account MINUSMA's crucial role in stabilizing Mali, we welcome its efforts aimed at improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers, which have resulted in a reduction of fatalities and casualties in the Mission.

The impact of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel on the stabilization of the region cannot be ignored. We therefore welcome the efforts made towards operationalizing the Joint Force, including its police component, which will ensure continuity between Joint Force operations and the judicial systems, in accordance with the rule of law and human rights. We also take note of the appointment of the Joint Force's new Force Commander, General Hanena Ould Sidi of Mauritania, and his assumption of his duties.

In conclusion, Poland commends Special Representative Mahamat Saleh Annadif for his excellent leadership, and all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their continued hard work in a challenging environment. We also welcome the appointment of Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre of Sweden as Force Commander of MINUSMA.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

Russia welcomed the successful holding of presidential elections in Mali in July and August. We are pleased that the voting took place without serious violations or incidents, according to African and international observers. We are grateful to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for its timely provision of logistics and technical assistance for the preparation for the elections. We hope that the election results will contribute to restoring peace and achieving national harmony in Mali and will enable Malian society to cope with its ongoing problems and deal more effectively with the terrorist threat in the Sahara-Sahel region generally.

We note Bamako's efforts to restore a State presence in northern Mali. The work on organizing municipal bodies has been stepped up since the summer and temporary administrations have been appointed in most districts. Importantly, the Government has begun to help to stimulate economic activity in those areas, which is the best antidote to new social disturbances.

We also note that Malians are making efforts to reform the security sector. The emphasis here should be on implementing the 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Strengthening confidence-building measures and collaboration between the country's armed forces and the groups under the control of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform should become the basis for restoring peace and order. We support starting joint patrols in Gao as soon as possible.

We welcome the signing on 15 October of a pact for peace between the Malian authorities and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. It is important that representatives of the Platform and the Coordination also announced their commitment to the document. We hope that it represents an additional guarantee that the parties will implement the road map and the Peace Agreement, as provided for in resolution 2423 (2018).

While acknowledging the obvious positive developments in the work of achieving a settlement in Mali, we should not omit to point out some other

and unfortunately less encouraging trends there. We are concerned about the sharp jump in the number of terrorist acts in the past three months. Interethnic and intercommunal conflicts are becoming increasingly intense in central Mali, and the situation is complicated by the fact that the presence of the authorities in these areas is still at a critically low level. In that regard, we should note the results that MINUSMA has had in reconciling the hostile parties.

We are also concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation. The number of people in need of help has gone up almost one and a half times over the past year, a very worrying trend. We call on all outside donors to fulfil their funding commitments for the humanitarian appeal. We should remind everyone that the desperate circumstances that Mali's young people find themselves in leave them with nowhere to go but to join the ranks of terrorist, extremist or criminal groups.

The situation in Mali is a significant factor for African security generally. However, neither will it possible to reach a settlement there without normalizing the situation in the entire region. The Libya factor is still playing a negative role in that regard. The connections between the terrorists operating in Mali and in the region as a whole are becoming increasingly visible. In that regard, we support the concrete steps taken by the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel to form their Joint Force to fight terrorism and organized crime, and we hope that their role in ensuring regional security will increase.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his useful briefing on recent developments in Mali, particularly in the wake of the presidential elections held in July.

Since Ambassador Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali, is here with us today, I take this opportunity to congratulate President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on his re-election as Mali's Head of State. I also express my country's satisfaction regarding the fact that the electoral process was transparent and credible, and commend the efforts of the Government and all political stakeholders, as well as international partners, to that end.

I would like to address three aspects of the subject under discussion today.

First, with respect to the political situation, we have closely followed recent political developments in Mali and also listened to the address delivered by the President of the Republic of Mali to the General Assembly during the general debate last month (see A/73/PV.8), in which he presented his Government's priorities for the upcoming period, including its focus on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the serious steps taken by his Government in this regard. Kuwait welcomes this positive development.

During the past few months we have witnessed the restoration of Government authority in northern and central Mali, and we also note that the Government has prepared a national strategy for security sector reform. We further commend the efforts of Prime Minister Maïga to achieve stability. He recently visited central Mali, a region that is suffering from instability and an absence of State authority. He is also working to expedite the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

We welcomed the signing last Monday of the pact for peace between the United Nations, the Government, the Platform Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, renewing the commitment of all parties to the implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, in implemention of paragraph 5 of resolution 2423 (2018). We want to emphasize the important role played by the international mediation team, under the leadership of Algeria, in monitoring developments and making tangible progress.

With regard to the presidential elections held in July, we commend the efforts of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and Special Representative Annadif for their efforts during and after the election process, including the provision of technical, logistical and security support with a view to reducing tensions between the various parties. We urge everyone to respect the election results and prepare for the upcoming parliamentary elections, which were postponed until next year with the approval of all stakeholders. We hope that the postponement will allow enough time to implement the necessary reforms in the country, pursuant to the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, and with the participation of all political parties.

Secondly, concerning the security and humanitarian situations, we are still concerned about the unstable security situation in some regions of Mali. The threats posed by terrorist groups still exist, and we have seen their impact on the most recent electoral process. We value the efforts of the Malian forces and MINUSMA to contain those threats and prevent the security situation from deteriorating further. However, the terrorist groups are not only a threat to all military forces, but are increasingly threateningcivilians. We deeply regret the killing of 287 civilians during the reporting period. Terrorist threats also led to the displacement of large numbers of Malians. The number of those in need of humanitarian aid amounts to nearly 5.2 million people. We are also concerned about the increasing threats targeting humanitarian workers, who are undertaking efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Malian people.

We have seen an increase in the use of improvised explosive devices in 2018, rising to almost 130 incidents. However, the number of related casualties has decreased. We apreciate the efforts of MINUSMA in training and awareness-raising, and we encourage it to pursue those efforts in the future. We also underscore the importance of ensuring coordination among the different active forces in Mali. We commend the continuous support of MINUSMA to the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) Joint Force, which plays an essential role in combating the threats in the Sahel region. We look forward to strengthening it to the fullest.

Thirdly and lastly, with regard to the next steps, we are aware that the Malian Government is in need of time and resources to achieve security and stability and restore the rule of law in Mali. After the latest presidential elections and the reappointment of Prime Minister Maïga, who has facilitated progress since the beginning of his term, we look forward to a more focused approach by the Government to ensure the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Kuwait stands ready to cooperate with all Council members to take the necessary measures in order to facilitate that process. We urge all parties to build on the progress attained so far.

Achieving sustainable development is essential to the realization of peace and stability in Mali and the region. It is also important to improve economic conditions, because that would give Malians greater hope for job opportunities and a better future. We welcome the new strategic framework of the Government, which is based on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the vision for Mali 2040.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his briefing. I would also like to welcome Mr. Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali and my personal friend. We thank Mr. Koen Davidse for his service as Deputy Special Representative for Mali, and we wish every success to his replacement, Ms. Joanne Adamson, who is here with us today.

Today, I would like to focus on three points: first, the political and security situation; secondly, the peace process; and thirdly, action for peacekeeping.

First, I will address the political and security situation. Allow me to offer President Keita the sincere congratulations of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on his re-election. I would also like to commend the joint and coordinated action of the international community, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), in supporting the electoral process. In the wake of the elections, tensions between the Government and the opposition have persisted. It is essential that the long-awaited reforms move forward. Decentralization is an imperative. The electoral system needs to be radically overhauled.

Malian citizens deserve to have a Government that they can trust, and one that trusts them. The Secretary-General considers the human rights situation alarming. The fact that the Malian armed forces are directly linked to 18 cases of violations of those rights raises serious concerns. Four cases involve summary executions. We urge the Malian Government to prevent and publicly denounce human rights violations, including those committed by Malian forces, such as in Boulikessi, where 12 civilians were killed. The Government must investigate allegations of violations and prosecute the perpetrators. It is important therefore that those responsible, as established by the investigations, not go unpunished. That is particularly true in central Mali, a region where human rights and the security situation are deteriorating rapidly, as Mr. Lacroix mentioned.

The repercussions of Mali's instability are felt beyond the country's borders, throughout the Sahel and in Europe. The stability of the entire region is crucial to the fight against such threats as trafficking in human beings, illegal immigration, terrorism and organized

crime. We also call for the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). That includes the implementation of a strict framework for human rights compliance. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will maintain its strong commitment as a partner for stability in the Sahel.

Secondly, I now turn to the peace process. Following the elections, the President of Mali was re-elected. We therefore expect a new impetus to be given to the peace process and the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Admittedly, progress has been made with regard to the peace process. But the full implementation of the agreement is far from assured. Malians have seen too few tangible results. That is why we call on all parties concerned, and especially the Government, to take up the challenge and move forward, in the interest of the Malian State, its population and the stability of the entire region.

The role of MINUSMA has been essential in supporting the peace process and stabilization efforts in northern Mali. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to give new momentum to the political process. We welcome the signing of the pact for peace on Monday. We particularly welcome the Government's commitment to an inclusive approach. The implementation of the pact should be as inclusive as possible. It must embody the voice and effective participation of women, youth and civil society.

The pact must also be used to make progress on the peace agreement and make it more measurable. We expect progress on the key proposals of the agreement: first, the effective establishment of legitimate bodies and services of the State; secondly, decentralization; thirdly, reconciliation; and fourthly, reform of the security sector and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

Resolution 2423 (2018) requires the full integration into the Malian defence and security forces of at least 1,000 members of the signatory armed groups. We expect all parties to honour that obligation. The Council has already been firm in its exhortations to make the necessary progress. We must not hesitate to continue in that direction by using the sanctions regime against those who obstruct the peace process.

Thirdly, I will speak about action for peacekeeping. The Kingdom of the Netherlands commends the men and women engaged in the Mission, including our compatriots. During the last reporting period, the Mission suffered no casualties, even though attacks against it and its troops continued. That is due to the effective implementation of the recommendations of the report authored by former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers. It is also the result of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, for which Mali is a key case study. But as Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix said, we must remain cautious because we do not know what tomorrow will bring.

As a troop-contributing country, the Netherlands has sought to improve the performance and impact of MINUSMA. In particular, we have contributed to cutting-edge capabilities in the area of intelligence. We have also encouraged a rotation system, recognizing that the continued availability of those resources is crucial to the effectiveness of peacekeeping. We will continue to support the Secretary-General in his efforts to advance the priorities of Action for Peacekeeping. We commend the leadership of Côte d'Ivoire on that issue, in its capacity as co-Chair of the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations.

The new MINUSMA mandate requires a comprehensive strategic framework. It attaches particular attention to migration, climate and the human rights capabilities of the Mission. We would appreciate it if the Secretary-General could elaborate on those issues in his next report. It is essential that MINUSMA have the surge resources and capacities necessary to effectively implement its mandate. That includes taking firm and effective measures to protect civilians, by military and non-military means, in particular in central Mali.

In conclusion, now that the elections are behind us, our work begins.

Mr. Woldegerima (Ethiopia): We thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing on the most recent political and security situation in Mali. We also want to extend our appreciation to the military and civilian personnel of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), who are operating under difficult circumstances.

We welcome the successful holding of the presidential elections in Mali, which culminated with the re-election of President Boubacar Keita. We note that the election was held in a peaceful manner and

without major incident, and we congratulate Mali for achieving an important milestone in its governance dispensations. The formation of the new Cabinet, comprising one-third women, is a sign of the positive response of the Government in meeting its commitment with regard to the empowerment of women.

The role of MINUSMA continues to be very important and its support of the electoral process, in coordination with the African Union and other international partners, is commendable. We also thank the Mission for its support to the Malian defence and security forces, including through increased patrols in remote areas. We agree with Under-Secretary-General Lacroix that the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali remains very central, and we are encouraged by the progress made with regard to its implementation, including the nomination of interim authorities at the district level, the creation of municipalities and the adoption of the national security sector reform strategy. We hope that the post-election period will witness more invigorated efforts by the parties to ensure greater peace and stability in the country.

The pact for peace, signed by the Government of Mali and the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2423 (2018), is a step in the right direction that we hope will help in accelerating the implementation of the peace agreement.

Regarding the extension of State authority in the north, the appointment of officials by the Government as members of the interim administrations in the majority of districts is a welcome development. MINUSMA's support in the restoration and extension of State authority in the northern and central parts of the country remains vital, as is the capacity-building support bof the Mission, together with the United Nations Development Programme, in the implementation of the national policy of preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism in Mali.

We join others in strongly condemning the terrorist attacks against Malian defence and security forces, as well as international forces. We are concerned by the frequency of those attacks in central Mali, as expressed by other delegations. That underscores the need for the international community to continue supporting the fight against terrorism and the stabilization efforts in Mali.

The contribution of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in returning peace and stability to Mali and the region remains absolutely important. We commend the Force for deploying all seven battalions and its success in conducting several operations since its establishment. To ensure that the operations of that important regional force are effective and sustainable, predictable financing remains critical, as identified by the tripartite mechanism, comprising the Joint Force, the United Nations and the European Union.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation, as a result of insecurity in the northern and central regions, as well as the impacts of poor rainfall in 2017, is also a matter of concern. We hope that the international community will enhance its support in filling the funding gap.

We are encouraged by the commitment of the regional interim administrations, which are materializing several projects targeting the improvement of the provision of basic services and enhancing social cohesion in all five northern regions, with funding from the Government.

The implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel remains absolutely important, and we believe that there is need for enhanced efforts in its implementation.

Finally, we support the proposal of France for a press element at the end of this meeting.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

Following the recent successful presidential elections, President Keita has started a new term of office. He has promised to continue to actively implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, thereby injecting new momentum into the peace process. China expresses its appreciation in that connection.

However, at the same time, the security situation in north and central Mali remains grim with rampant terrorist activities inside the country and in the neighbouring region posing a serious threat to the peace process. The international community should, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and leadership of Mali, continue to support the peace process and provide support to peace and the development of the country.

First, we must continue to help the parties in the implementation of the peace agreement and moving the political process forward. The political solution is the only way out. In that connection, China hopes that

the signatories of the peace agreement will continue to demonstrate political will, facilitate the implementation of the agreement and work together to achieve national development and reconstruction.

Secondly, we must continue to support the Government's capacity-building in governance and security. The Malian Government bears the primary responsibility for maintaining peace and stability in the country. At the request of the Government, the international community should continue to support and assist the Government in its security and counter-terrorism capacity-building and enhance the Government's ability to respond to security threats independently.

Thirdly, we must support regional and subregional organizations in playing a mediation and coordinating role, as the peace and security of the country are closely linked with the overall security situation in the region. Therefore, it is necessary to take a comprehensive approach and to respond to terrorist activities inside the country and in the neighbouring regions through regional cooperation.

China welcomes the formation of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel to independently fight security threats, including terrorism, in the region. That is an important initiative on the part of the African countries to achieve strength through unity and to maintain peace and stability in Africa and in the world at large. China commends the preparatory work done by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in order to support the Joint Force and hopes that, once the conditions are ripe, MINUSMA will be able to take effective actions to backstop the Joint Forces as soon as possible.

MINUSMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali have played an important role in maintaining peace and stability in the country and in the implementation of the peace agreement. China expresses its appreciation in that connection, and hopes that MINUSMA will continue to communicate and coordinate with the Government in order to help the latter in the implementation of the peace agreement and in enhancing its security capacity-building.

At the same time, the Council and the Secretariat must pay attention to the issue of the safety and security of the Mission's personnel. We hope that the secretariat of MINUSMA will take effective actions in areas relating to the Mission's equipment and training, campsite planning, security and protection material and equipment, medical ability, and information-gathering and -sharing in order to strengthen the safety and security of the Mission's personnel. China supports the peace process in Mali. Chinese peacekeepers are actively engaged in the Mission's peacekeeping operations and have made their contribution to stability in the country. China is ready to continue to play a constructive roll towards the achievement of peace, stability and development in the country and in Africa at large.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting, and we thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for the important information he has provided. We also welcome Ambassador Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali.

We would like, through him, to congratulate the people and Government of Mali on the holding of their presidential elections in a peaceful manner, despite the complicated security situation. We think it is important for it to be able to lead to greater stability and dialogue between the political parties in order to more effectively address the serious challenges facing the country.

We also wish to highlight the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as the role played by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other international actors, such as France. In this new phase, we wish to renew our support for the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

In particular, we underline the importance of the progress made in the appointment of interim authorities in the north of the country, the adoption of the national security sector reform strategy, and the gradual operationalization of mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Kidal and Timbuktu. We also highlight the recent signing of the pact for peace, in accordance with resolution 2423 (2018). We hope that it will help revitalize and accelerate the implementation of the peace agreement and contribute to the stability of the country.

We note with concern the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Mali, particularly in the centre of the country, as well as the alarming number of cases of murder, kidnapping,

intimidation and sexual and gender-based violence. Greater State presence must be projected throughout the territory in order to promote the rule of law, combat terrorist groups and put an end to clashes between armed groups. In that connection, we highlight three items to prioritize in order to achieve sustainable peace in Mali.

First, the signatory parties to the peace agreement must work to reconstitute and redeploy Mali's defence and security forces and territorial police. That is urgent in order to lay the foundation for stability and civilian protection in the country.

Secondly, there is a need to combat impunity and ensure accountability for serious human rights violations committed by armed groups and by Malian law enforcement and security forces. It is essential that the judicial system be able to investigate and process complaints in a comprehensive and timely manner.

Thirdly, the root causes of conflict must be addressed in order to build a peaceful and inclusive society, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The economic growth of recent years is important, but it is also crucial to increase the budget for education and employment opportunities, particularly for young people, and to ensure the full participation of women. In that regard, we highlight the efforts of the Malian Government in preparing a new strategic framework for economic recovery and sustainable development.

In conclusion, we wish to acknowledge the work of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel to strengthen the regional response to scourges such as terrorism and transnational organized crime, as well as the key role of MINUSMA in a particularly complex environment.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, my delegation once again thanks the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing and his hard work on this issue. The convening of this meeting is undoubtedly further proof of the willingness of the Security Council to support Mali in the face of the complex and multidimensional challenges it faces, and allows us to renew our firm commitment to the stabilization of this country.

We welcome the peaceful conduct of the recent presidential elections that led to the re-election of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and the formation of a more representative Government with significant female representation. In wishing him success in his functions, we recall that progress in the full and inclusive implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali must remain one of the main priorities of the new Government. Indeed, the peace agreement remains the ideal inclusive and consensual framework for restoring peace and stability in Mali. It is therefore essential that the signatory parties redouble their efforts to ensure the diligent implementation of all the provisions of the Agreement.

However, my Government welcomes progress made in the priority action timeline and especially its road map, such as the creation of interim authorities in the five regions of northern Mali; the redeployment of the army in several cities of the country and the gradual resumption of mixed patrols composed of elements of the Malian defence and security forces; the pro-Government movements of the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad in Kidal and Timbuktu, as agreed in 2016 in the framework of the Operational Coordination Mechanism; and the start of the preregistration phase for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, which is crucial. These are all undoubtedly positive steps to build trust between the security forces and the various local armed groups.

While it is true that the lack of implementation of the commitments undertaken can be partly explained by the lack of political will of the parties concerned, we must accept that there can be no lasting stability in Mali if the agreement is not fully implemented. Therefore, after the holding of the presidential elections and the coming legislative elections, substantial progress must be made in mobilizing all actors in order to make further important gains towards the implementation of the key institutional and security reforms outlined in the agreement and in resolution 2423 (2018).

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea will continue to support any initiative aimed at promoting ownership of peace processes in unstable countries and regions of the world. That is why we gladly welcome the signing of the pact for peace on 15 October. As Mr. Lacroix has pointed out, this new partnership among the United Nations, the Malian Government and the signatory armed movements does not replace the 2015 agreement, the priority action timeline or even the March road map. Instead, it symbolizes the renewal of the parties' commitment to giving significant impetus to the

implementation of the peace agreement and serves as a catalyst to strengthen the inclusive nature of the political process. Similarly, its objective should not be to reinvent what has been agreed, but rather to allow for the effective implementation of the commitments undertaken in the framework of the peace agreement, with a clear and well-defined time horizon.

In that context, we must also reaffirm our satisfaction with the operational support provided by Operation Barkhane to MINUSMA, which must focus primarily on mechanisms to improve its operational capacity, including the security of its personnel. In addition, the stabilization of the situation in central Mali, the focus of continuous terrorist attacks, requires a comprehensive solution. We reiterate that any response to violent extremism must go beyond a military approach. We should focus on a humanitarian and sustainable response that can meet the political and economic needs of the population and peoples of Mali.

I conclude by endorsing the words of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, who recently stated at a high-level meeting on Mali and the Sahel:

> "We cannot stress enough that for lasting peace to be built in Mali, the inclusion of all sectors of society is needed. Although it is true that violence cannot be halted without the involvement of the armed parties, it is also clear that without the full participation of other components of society, the achievements already obtained will remain fragile, reversible and at the mercy of any disagreement between the parties. The stabilization of Mali means the stabilization of the neighbouring countries and that the entire Sahel region and beyond. That means that the signatory parties to the Peace Agreement bear a great responsibility."

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Let me begin by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, and all of his staff for their important work, as well as Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. We welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/866), and through Under-Secretary-General Lacroix we pay tribute to the bravery of those working in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), in the very challenging environment in which the military and civilian personnel operate. And, of course, we unequivocally condemn all attacks against MINUSMA personnel.

I would like to congratulate President Keita on his re-election and the Malian people and their institutions on the relatively peaceful elections, despite terrorist attempts to disrupt the process. We also commend the support provided by MINUSMA and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif in bringing all parties together for a peaceful conclusion. The United Kingdom encourages President Keita to redouble efforts to secure a lasting peace and to improve the lives of all Malian people, including those facing increasing insecurity in the central region.

I join my colleagues in welcoming the signing of the pact for peace by the Agreement Monitoring Committee. The parties that have reconfirmed their commitment to accelerating the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali must now take action and fulfil their commitment to make tangible progress against the 22 March road map. Their credibility is on the line. Progress must also include the meaningful participation of women in the peace process, and we welcome the steps taken by President Keita to ensure that the 30 per cent quota for women in elected positions is met, as per Malian law.

The price of lack of progress is clear: the humanitarian and security situation continues to deteriorate across Mali, particularly in the central region; and 287 civilians have been killed in the past three months, the highest number since MINUSMA deployed. Today 5.2 million people require life-saving and protection assistance, up from 3.8 million in 2017. It is therefore more vital than ever that the Malian Government and the international community fulfil their humanitarian and security commitments. In that context, we welcome the role of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

An integrated security plan is needed to address the causes of the humanitarian crisis and civilian casualties. We are concerned about the number of human rights violations and cases of sexual exploitation and abuse; all such violations must be thoroughly investigated in order to bring perpetrators of crimes to account, including those that involve the Malian defence and security forces. This is a global priority for the United Kingdom. Yesterday in London we hosted an international safeguarding summit as part of

our commitment to driving up standards and tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

Returning to MINUSMA, we welcome its ongoing efforts to focus its mandate on core political and security tasks, and we encourage further progress in this regard as we look towards MINUSMA's six-month review, in February.

The bottom line is that rapid progress is needed by the politicians on the implementation of the Agreement. This is the best and only sustainable way to improve the lives of the people of Mali and to enhance collective peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Bolivia thanks the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing on the situation in the Republic of Mali and the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) on the ground. We also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mali, Ambassador Konfourou. We echo other delegations that have expressed their support for the Chadian members of the Mission who were wounded in the course of an attack using an improvised explosive device and wish them a speedy and full recovery. We would like also to express our condolences in connection with the death of a member of the Barkhane force during the discharge of the force's mission.

We would like to begin by underscoring the important progress made in the political sphere in Mali. In the framework of the provisions of resolution 2423 (2018), we commend and welcome the signing of the pact for peace a few days ago in Bamako, on the margins of the meetings of the Agreement Monitoring Committee. We fully agree with the delegations that have stressed the importance of that event, as it offers an opportunity to revitalize the peace process in that brotherly nation. We also agree with the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 87 of his report (S/2018/866) that the pact for peace should not "duplicate structures or replace the Agreement". The pact is, in any case, simply an instrument that represents a positive complement to the interests and efforts of the Malian people, the United Nations and the international community, as it contributes to defusing tensions and to building a system of democratic coexistence that will help to alleviate the difficult situation that prevails today in Mali.

Furthermore, we commend the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Mali regarding, first and foremost, the definitive cessation of hostilities on the basis of national plans and the taking of fundamental political measures aimed at achieving peace and stability in the country. Regarding the elections that took place in July, we commend the fact that in spite of certain difficulties, the elections took place in satisfactory conditions and in a peaceful environment, in the presence of international observers and in the context of the deployment and active role of the Malian security forces and the crucial support of MINUSMA, which included mainly logistical support and technical assistance.

We wish also to stress the progress that the Government of Mali has been spearheading in areas such as the appointment and deployment of interim authorities in 21 districts of the five northern regions, as well as the progressive operationalization of the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism.

It has been five years since the creation of MINUSMA and three years since the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Mali's efforts to achieve the necessary stability still require the full support of the Council and of our Organization as a whole. The complex and fragile humanitarian and security situation in Mali has spread throughout the Sahel region as a result of the interventionism and regime-change policies in Libya. The situation has had repercussions on the volatile security sector, compounded by the presence of terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations in the country.

Asymmetric and terrorist threats, continuing clashes between armed groups, and intercommunal and sexual violence continue to threaten the safety and lives of civilians and to hinder the economic growth and development of the country. We note with deep concern that in northern and central Mali, the criminal activities of mercenaries, drug and arms traffickers, and those who traffic in human beings have become a way of life that is hampering the full implementation of the Peace Agreement and contributing on a daily basis to the deteriorating security situation and political process.

For all of these reasons, it is vital to highlight and express appreciation for the work of the personnel of MINUSMA, which has stepped up its efforts to

ensure not only the definitive implementation of the Peace Agreement through monitoring the latter and facilitating a political dialogue through its mediation and good offices in coordination with the Malian Government, but also the restoration and extension of State authority in the northern and central parts of the country. Similarly, the work of the Mission in the development of the reform of the security sector action plan, the implementation of the national vision for the reconstitution and redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces, and the development of the conceptual framework for the territorial police in the regions of Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu is of critical importance.

In conclusion, we cannot ignore the outstanding contributions made by the regional and subregional organizations, led by the African Union, in cooperation and coordination with the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie. We strongly urge and encourage the international community to continue to contribute, with technical support, economic and humanitarian cooperation, to all initiatives to benefit the population by establishing stability and permanent peace in Mali and the Sahel region.

I shall now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to convey the regrets of Ms. Kamissa Camara, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, who is unable to be with us this morning because of schedule demands.

I am very pleased to convey to you, Madam President, the warm congratulations of my delegation on the accession of your beautiful country, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, to the presidency of the Council for the month of October. We assure you of our full cooperation.

Let me also express to the delegation of the United States of America our sincere appreciation for its outstanding conduct of the Council's work last month.

The briefings on this item are always a good opportunity to reiterate to Secretary-General António Guterres and to all United Nations personnel involved in Mali the profound gratitude of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, the Government and the people of Mali, for their ongoing commitment to peace and stability in Mali, the Sahel and the rest of the world.

The Government of Mali takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/866) before us, and I thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for introducing it. I take note of the comments and strong expectations that Council members expressed earlier. Let me now share with the Council the remarks of the Government of Mali on the report of the Secretary-General.

First, I welcome the fact that the report recognizes the substantial progress made recently in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers process. Among the developments that have been noted, I wish to highlight the successful organization on 29 July and 12 August of the election of the President of the Republic within the time prescribed by the Constitution of Mali. The balloting, which took place in conditions deemed satisfactory by national and international observers, established the election of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita as Head of State for a second five-year term.

The good preparation and the satisfactory conduct of the electoral process, in a framework of unwavering cooperation, were made possible thanks to the combined efforts of all the actors of the Malian public sphere, including members of civil society, as well as the significant involvement of partners and friends of Mali. I commend the role and immense contribution of United Nations personnel and other national and international forces in the successful organization of the electoral process. I would make special mention here of the remarkable work done by Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

I would also like to pay tribute to Belgian Major General Jean-Paul Deconinck, whose deployment ended on 2 October, for his exemplary leadership and outstanding service as Force Commander of MINUSMA. By the same token, I extend the warm congratulations of the Government of Mali to his successor, Swedish Lieutenant General Dennis Gyllensporre, for the confidence placed in him by the Secretary-General. We assure him of the full cooperation of the Government of Mali.

This is also an opportunity to commend the excellent work done over the past three years by Mr. Koen Davidse of the Netherlands as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali. I welcome the appointment of Ms. Joanne Adamson of the United Kingdom to that post and assure her of all Malians. I know that Joanne is in the Chamber. She is a great friend of Mali and Malians, and she can count on our support.

I understand the Council's impatience with what it considers to be delays in the implementation of the agreement. However, I can assure the Council that there is no ambivalence in the shared desire of the signatory parties to honour the commitments made in the irreplaceable instrument that is the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The perfect illustration of that has just been provided yet again by the Malian parties with the signing on Monday, 15 October, of the pact for peace in Mali between the Government and the United Nations, and the solemn accession of the signatory movements, the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups, through a written declaration of acceptance of that instrument. Under the terms of the pact, a copy of which I have provided to Council members, the Malian parties reaffirm their firm commitment to accelerating the diligent and full implementation of the agreement, in accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 2423 (2018). However, the pact for peace is by no means a new agreement in Mali.

It is true that the fulfilment of those commitments has long suffered from the belated establishment of relations of real trust among the various Malian protagonists. Today, that prerequisite is now satisfied, and the resulting positive effects are very telling. As the Council is well aware, the establishment of interim authorities and the ongoing operationalization of mixed patrols, combined with the gradual redeployment of the Malian armed forces, allow for the long-awaited return of the administration and basic social services in many localities previously held in the grip of terrorists and armed gangs.

Secondly, the absence of belligerence and clashes between the Malian armed forces and the signatory movements is another illustration of the progress achieved. The return of trust has also resulted in the participation of the signatory movements in safeguarding the electoral process. The Secretary-General saw this positive and constructive momentum during his visit to Mali in May.

In the same vein, 63 territorial collectivities have been created in the new regions of Ménaka and Taoudenni, with a view to making them fully operational so that they can fulfil their primary mission of delivering basic social services to our populations. In that context, I welcome the continuation of the preregistration campaign for combatants, which is a major step forward in the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, the cornerstone of our national strategy for stabilizing the country. On that point, I note that the Malian parties agreed at the meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, on 15 October in Bamako, to launch an accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process for the period 5-30 November.

Still on the subject of our efforts to provide security throughout our national territory, the process of security sector reform is proceeding normally, according to the criteria set, in particular with regard to ensuring that all actors concerned are included.

As the Council can see, the Government remains fully committed to playing its full part in the early implementation of the agreement. However, it must be acknowledged that the implementation of certain provisions of the agreement requires considerable financial commitments that, regrettably, Mali alone cannot make. That is why I reiterate the Government's call for the effective marshalling of the resources pledged by our partners at the donor conference on Mali held in Paris on 22 October 2015, which would enable us to uphold the commitments outlined in the road map of 22 March and the pact for peace that we have just signed.

Today more than ever, the continued implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers process, is one of the main priorities of the President of the Republic and of the Government of Mali. We have no other option, let alone a plan B. That is the sovereign choice we have made to build genuine and lasting reconciliation for our people in a truly diverse Mali. That is why, in the new governmental structure implemented on 9 September, the Head of State created the important Ministry for Ministry of National Reconciliation and Social Cohesion so as to ensure the improved coordination

of State actions and financial resources to implement the agreement.

The presence of several young people and women in the Government is also part of that dynamic. Women, for example, account for more than 30 per cent of the total number of Government employees, in accordance with legislation on the promotion of gender in decision-making bodies in Mali. We are also working on the charter for peace, unity and national reconciliation, emanating from the work of the Conference of National Understanding, which calls for innovative and courageous measures to help the people of Mali unite around a common future. At the same time, the Government is resuming its immense work on political and institutional reform with a view to adapting our institutions to Mali's current realities and enabling our governance system to respond effectively to the legitimate demands of our people.

The centre of our country continues to be affected by indiscriminate terrorist attacks that have resulted in many casualties, including among members of Mali's defence and security forces and innocent civilians. Thanks to the operationalization of the integrated security plan for the central regions, whose relevance is noted by the Secretary-General in his report, several State representatives and decentralized structures have returned to the most remote areas, much to people's relief. The school year has begun. The Head of Government, Mr. Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga, whose efforts have been lauded, visited those areas this month to mark the State's return, attend the start of the school year and distribute food aid in areas affected by insecurity or natural disasters. However, given the scale of the situation, it is necessary to maintain and even strengthen aid programmes administered by the specialized agencies of the United Nations and other competent bodies.

We are concerned about the funding gap in the 2018 humanitarian response plan, whose requirements total $330 million. Only 32 per cent of that sum has been raised, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report. That is why the Government of Mali joins the Secretary-General and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in launching a strong appeal to marshal additional financial resources to support Government efforts to implement assistance plans in response to multifaceted humanitarian crises, including plans for the return of displaced persons, returnees and basic social services.

I would like to turn now to the issue of human rights. The Government of Mali remains very concerned about respect for human rights in general, and human rights in particular — a focus that is consistent with our history and Mali's international commitments. The State of Mali is aware of its primary responsibility to protect people and their property, and the Government remains determined to continue and even strengthen the appropriate measures to ensure that human rights are respected, in particular those of our people. That is why all reported cases or allegations of violations are systematically investigated by the competent national structures. Disciplinary measures have already been taken against those suspected of violating the rights of individuals, even before investigations have been completed. In that regard, we remain open to all forms of cooperation in the areas of training, the sharing of experience or technical or financial support. That said, it should be recalled that, in accordance with paragraph 51 of the Secretary-General's report, most abuses are perpetrated by violent extremist groups, which, in their destructive fury, do not spare civilians or members of Malian or foreign forces.

Moreover, the Government agrees with the Secretary-General that any exit strategy must take into account the regional dimension, which is, regrettably, marked by an exponential increase in transnational organized crime. That was the reason for establishing the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which seeks to unite the efforts and actions of the five countries concerned in a comprehensive approach to effectively combat terrorists and drug-trafficking groups that have plagued our entire subregion, especially since the collapse of the Libyan State in 2011. We take this opportunity to request once again that the Council provide the Joint Force with an adequate mandate and sustainable resources, including through the United Nations, to enable it to discharge its mission as it sees fit, for the benefit of the people of the Sahel and the rest of the world.

I would like to conclude as I began, by reiterating the gratitude of the people of Mali to the United Nations and all of our bilateral and multilateral partners for their continued multifaceted support for the crisis-recovery process in Mali. Above all, I would like to assure the Council of the resolve of the President of the Republic of Mali, the Government and signatory movements to be relentless in the diligent and inclusive implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

emanating from the Algiers process. In that regard, we attach particular importance to the relevant provisions of resolution 2423 (2018), in particular paragraphs 4, 5 and 6.

Lastly, I again pay tribute to all victims — civilian and military, Malian and non-Malian — who have lost their lives in the line of duty in Mali. I would like to spare a thought for the twenty-third French soldier to die in Mali, only a few days ago. I wish a speedy recovery to the Chadian five soldiers who were wounded in Mali. Of course, I cannot forget our own forces and civilians.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.